

Message Text

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PAGE 01 VIENTI 00433 040155Z

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7825

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USLO PEKING

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 0433

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINS MOPS ENRG LA TH VN CH UR

SUBJECT: TOUR D'HORIZON WITH FRENCH DIPLOMAT IN VIENTIANE

SUMMARY: IN TOUR D'HORIZON WITH POLOFF, SENIOR FRENCH DIPLOMAT SAID THAT PHAM VAN DONG HAD IN EFFECT ADMITTED PRESENCE OF PAVN TROOPS IN LPDR TO WESTERN AMBASSADOR IN HANOI, NEW CHINA NEWS AGENCY REP IN VIENTIANE HAD ATTACKED PRO-SOVIET POLICY OF LAO AND VIETNAMESE, AND VIETNAMESE HAD COMPLETED PIPELINE INTO LPDR SOUTHEAST OF PAKSANE. END SUMMARY.

1. FRENCH DIPLOMAT SAID HE HAD REPORT FROM HANOI THAT UNNAMED WESTERN AMBASSADOR HAD STARTLED PHAM VAN DONG BY ASKING ABOUT PRESENCE OF PAVN FORCES IN LPDR. PRIMIN THOUGHT A WHILE AND THEN DID NOT DENY PRESENCE BUT SAID THAT CERTAIN THINGS HAD TO BE DONE IN INTERESTS OF "SOLIDARITY".

2. WHEN ASKED ABOUT NAYAN CHANDA STATEMENTS IN
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PAGE 02 VIENTI 00433 040155Z

FEBRUARY 25 ISSUE OF FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC REVIEW CONCERNING SINO-VIETNAMESE RAPPROACHMENT, FRENCH DIPLOMAT SAID HIS INFORMATION WAS THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES WERE CHILLY, PARTICULARLY OVER PARACELS. HE NOTED THAT NCNA REP IN VIENTIANE IN RECENT CONVERSATION WITH FRENCH HAD CRITICIZED PRO-SOVIET STANCE OF BOTH SRV AND LPDR.

3. FRENCH DIPLOMAT SAID THAT VIETNAMESE WITH HELP OF LAO LABOR HAD RECENTLY COMPLETED CONSTRUCTION OF PIPE-LINE FROM SRV TO TERMINUS NEAR ROUTE 13 AND MEKONG SOUTHEAST OF PAKSANE AND PAK KADING. THERE WERE TWO PIPELINES, HE SAID, EACH OF EIGHT CENTIMETER DIAMETER. VIETNAMESE WERE BUILDING UNDERGROUND OIL STORAGE TANKS AT TERMINUS, HE ADDED.

4. LAO INSURGENTS, HE WENT ON, WITHIN PAST TWO WEEKS HAD BURNED POL DEPOT AT KILOMETER 24 ON ROAD FROM VIENTIANE TO PAKSANE. THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL REPORTS OF PAVN TROOPS IN AREA. FRENCH DIPLOMAT SAID THERE WERE SEVEN PAVN REGIMENTS FURTHER SOUTH IN LPDR FROM PAK KADING TO KHONG.

5. FRENCH DIPLOMAT SAID A FRENCH AID EXPERT WHO TRAVELS WITH PUBLIC WORKS OFFICIALS TO BAN KEUN AREA NORTH OF VIENTIANE REPORTED HE HAD HEARD FREQUENT FIRING THERE. HE WAS TOLD BY LAO THAT INSURGENTS CONTROLLED SEVERAL VILLAGES BETWEEN EAST BANK OF NAM NGUM RIVER AND PHOU KHAO KHOUAI MOUNTAIN AND THAT LAO FORCES WERE FIRING INTO VILLAGES.

6. FINALLY, DIPLOMAT NOTED THAT A MARCH 2 DIPLOMATIC RECEPTION HE WAS CONVERSING WITH THAI CHARGE MEDHI WHEN VIETNAMESE AMBASSADOR PLUNGED IN FULL OF SMILES TO TELL MEDHI HE LOOKED FORWARD TO CLOSE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO OF THEM. FRENCHMAN NOTED THAT THIS

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PAGE 03 VIENTI 00433 040155Z

WAS QUITE A SHIFT IN AMBASSADOR'S ATTITUDE SINCE HE HAD EXPRESSED TO THE FRENCH HIS UNHAPPINESS WITH THE THAI JUST AFTER THE OCTOBER 1976, COUP.
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